

# Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## NEW REPORT: MORE EDUCATION, SKILLS NEEDED FOR TODAY'S JOBS

Some Washington employers leave jobs unfilled because job applicants lack skills

OLYMPIA--A new report from the state's Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (Workforce Board) shows the mismatch of workers' skills to employers' needs has a negative impact on businesses attempting to hire.

"This skills deficit is hurting employers as well as workers," said Workforce Board Executive Director Eleni Papadakis. "When employers can't find people with the right mix of education and skills, they can suffer lower productivity and reduced quality, and jobs go unfilled."

According to the Workforce Board's 2012 Employer Survey, of the estimated 60,000 Washington employers who hired in the last 12 months, one in five had difficulty finding qualified applicants. Of those who experienced hiring difficulties, one third left jobs unfilled. This came at a time when unemployment in Washington remained above 8 percent statewide, and reached double digits in some places.

The report showed that of employers attempting to hire, roughly one out of three with hiring difficulties experienced reduced quality, reduced output or sales, or lower overall productivity.

In particular, employers indicated the following types of skills as most frequently lacking in job candidates:

- Occupation-specific skills (85 percent)
- Positive work habits and attitudes (63 percent)
- Communications skills (62 percent)

Employers also reported difficulties finding workers with certain education levels, most often those with vocational diplomas or certificates, vocational associate's degrees or bachelor's degrees.

The Workforce Board conducts the Employer Needs and Practices Survey every two years, in cooperation with the Association of Washington Business and the Washington Chamber of Commerce Executives. The 2012 survey was conducted between September and December and includes the responses of 2,800 employers.

The only comprehensive survey of its kind in Washington, the Workforce Board's Employer Survey shines a light on common workforce issues across a range of industries. The survey results are extrapolated to the state's 119,000 firms with two or more employees.

For more details, including Survey Highlights and Summary: <http://wtb.wa.gov/EmployerSurvey.asp>

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*The Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board is a partnership of business, labor and government, dedicated to helping Washington residents obtain and succeed in family-wage jobs, while meeting employers' needs for skilled workers.*